

REMARKS

This application was originally filed with a Preliminary Amendment canceling Claims 1-20 and presenting in their stead Claims 21-40. Claims 21-40 are under final rejection.

Claim 21 is amended herein to include certain important limitations consistent with limitations originally present in Claim 32, which has also been amended.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 21-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Usenko et al. ('829).

In order to facilitate issuance of claims to allowable subject matter, key important distinguishing features from Usenko have been included in Claim 21, as amended.

At the outset, it is important to note that Claim 32, as filed, is patentable over Usenko. Since limitations consistent with Claim 32 now appear in independent Claim 21, all claims are submitted to be allowable for the reasons discussed immediately below.

In connection with Usenko, key features of Claim 32, now included in Claim 21, were rejected on the basis of Usenko at Column 4, Lines 24-35. It is respectfully submitted that the interpretation of Lines 24-35 is incorrect as stated in the Office Action.

It is important to understand that the object, method and result of the present invention all differ from Usenko. The present invention prevents the formation of blisters on the plane face of the substrate. In order to accomplish this, and consistent with the limitations in Claim 21, coalescence of at least a part of the micro-cavities is

accomplished while a pressure is applied to the plane face. The applied pressure is adjusted during coalescence to remain above a pressure referred to as the limiting pressure, which is a pressure below which blisters appear on the plane face and above which blisters do not appear on the plane face. Thus, the invention provides a method whereby blisters at the surface of plane face are prevented by application of pressure.

Usenko does not at all suggest the application of pressure while micro-blisters are formed within a substrate. Specifically, there is no mention in Usenko at Column 4, Lines 24-35 of the application of pressure to prevent blisters forming on the plane face of the substrate.

Usenko does not apply pressure to prevent blisters during the early heat-treatment step, when micro-cavities are formed. Usenko makes reference to pressure only with respect to the discussion in Column 5 of Figure 11, where Usenko applies hydrostatic pressure after micro-cavities have been formed. Usenko only applies a pressure in order to obtain separation of the structure. Thus, in Usenko, the application of a hydrostatic pressure occurs on a structure already having a layer of micro-cavities. The hydrostatic pressure provides force necessary to obtain separation of the structure.

It is respectfully submitted that the invention, as presently defined in the amended claims, is patentable over Usenko et al. for the reasons given herein and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests

that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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